



Choosing A Career

You can never start too soon.

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Starting your career is something that you can never do too soon.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not suggesting you start building a resume when you're in elementary school. I

am suggesting, however, that by the time you're in high school and old enough to work, you should be engaging in various educational, employment, and extracurricular activities that will make you more aware of the different choices and opportunities available to you. All of the experiences, knowledge, values, and skills that we possess make us capable of performing a variety of different tasks. Therefore, in order to narrow down your choices and find the job that's right for you, you need to identify certain aspects of your personality, and find jobs that both complement your personality and create the chance for happiness and success.

The first thing you should do when thinking about a possible career path is to identify your talents and skills, as well as your personal values. For example, if you're an outgoing individual who enjoys working with people, then you may want to consider a career in the service industry. On the other hand, if you're someone who tends to work better independently, maybe you should consider becoming an entrepreneur or someone who works at home. No matter what types of jobs you may qualify for, it's important to consider careers that agree with your values and beliefs. Regardless of whether or not you're capable of filling a particular position, if you don't believe in its practices you will not be able to do your work to the best of your ability. Not to mention the fact that violating your beliefs on a daily basis can be damaging to your moral and overall self-esteem. By being able to recognize the type of person you are, you can easily eliminate many career options, and bring yourself closer to finding your ideal job.

So let's say you're a typical teenager who has no clue about what type of career to pursue. The best thing you could possibly do would be to experiment with as many different jobs and career options as possible. Just like your parents told you when you were a child, "you'll never know if you like something until you try it." This statement is particularly true in regards to choosing a career. The more jobs you take, and the earlier you start looking, the more likely you'll be able to find the career that's right for you. When I say that you should try a lot of different occupations, I'm not suggesting that you go from job to job with a lack of commitment to any one of them in particular. That is a very bad idea, because potential employers will be reluctant to hire you when they see how often you've changed your mind. Rather than simply changing your job whenever you want to try something new, you should try looking into different field trips and job presentations that are available. Such events are usually sponsored by local companies

Being a teenager myself, I know first hand how the job opportunities and chances for career development are not always readily available for young people. Though it may be difficult, I believe it's best, at least in the beginning, to look for jobs that give you experience and insight, rather than just money. If you're "strapped for cash" and you need a job that pays well, you could always try finding a job that best satisfies your financial needs, while also searching for some type of job shadowing or internship opportunity. Job shadowing and internships are extremely useful tools in helping people to better understand the different aspects of different occupations. I highly recommend participating in some form of job shadowing or internship activity, as well as taking a variety of different jobs, because it's impossible not to benefit from these experiences. At the very least, a bad experience with a particular job or internship will serve as an indicator that such a career is not right for you.

As any employer will tell you, an employee with good communication skills is always in de-

mand. For this reason, it would be a wise decision for you to work hard at developing strong reading, writing, and speaking skills. To further improve upon these skills, it would be an equally good idea to learn some foreign languages as well. I myself have studied French for seven years, and I plan to begin studying Spanish in the near future. The world is becoming increasingly diverse, which is particularly

in order to attract new employees. The goal of these activities is to provide you with information about various career opportunities and how you can pursue them. What I'm suggesting is that you try different careers until you find the one you like best. In other words, there's no reason to stay at a job that you don't like, but if you have a job that you enjoy, you should consider pursuing a career in that particular field.



evident in the United States. Being able to comprehend foreign languages, in addition to possessing strong communication skills in general, is an asset that can set you apart from your competition, as well as make you indispensable to your employers and co-workers.

I previously mentioned the importance of finding a career that incorporates your skills, talents, and morals, in order for you to enjoy yourself and be as successful as possible. On the same note, it's also important to find jobs where you are interested in the subject matter, and to which you can fully commit yourself. If you find your work to be interesting and worthwhile, then you are more likely to take pride in what you do, as well as work harder to maintain a consistent level of quality. On the other hand, if you find your work to be boring and useless, then you will have little or no motivation to complete it well, and at the same time your morale and self-esteem will be adversely affected. This is the reason why it's more important to choose a job based on its subject matter, and not on its salary. As they say, "money can't buy happiness," so it's pointless to base your life on financial gain. Also keep in mind that a lesser-paying job that you enjoy could potentially lead to more profitable and rewarding opportunities down the road.

A lot of the things I've told you may seem like they don't apply to you because you're too young. I'm only eighteen years old myself, and I've only just begun the process of developing a career. The point of my suggestions is not to tell you what you need to be doing now, but what you may want to be doing in the near future. Though I've had only minimal work experience at this point, I've gained something from all of my experiences that will prove useful throughout the rest of my working life. What you and I as young adults should be doing to prepare for the future is simply keeping our options open, and always be looking for new opportunities and experiences that come our way.

"The future of work consists of learning a living."

- Marshall McLuhan, Univ of Toronto